

CYRUS BRIDGE

195 feet west of the intersection of County Road 19  
and U.S. Route 52

Cyrus  
Wayne County  
West Virginia

HAER No. WV-54

HAER  
WVA  
50-CYRUS  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

CYRUS BRIDGE

HAER No. WV-54

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WVA  
50-CYRUS,  
1-

Location: 195 feet west of the intersection of County Road 19 and U.S. Route 52, Wayne County, West Virginia. Formerly spanned an unnamed intermittent tributary of Whites Creek.

Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 17.362480 4240770.  
USGS Quadrangle: Burnaugh, West Virginia/ Kentucky

Builder / Fabricator: Champion Bridge Company (made and erected the deck); George T. Burris and James C. Wilson (did the concrete work).

Date of Construction: Stone abutments, 1903. New deck and concrete work, 1918.

Present Owner: Norfolk and Western Railway Company, Roanoke, Virginia.

Present Use: None. Last used in 1924.

Significance: The Cyrus Bridge was an essential structure along Whites Creek Road, which connected the village of Whites Creek and Wayne, the county seat. Commercial goods intended for sale in Wayne were brought to Whites Creek by water, rail, and road. These were deposited nearby in private storehouses west of the bridge, and were transhipped by wagon and truck to Wayne. Some of these goods were sold locally in community stores both east and west of the bridge. The bridge was used briefly, 1918-1924, in connection with a grade crossing over a single track line, but was abandoned when an underpass was built to cross beneath new double tracks laid in 1924. The Cyrus Bridge succeeded a wooden bridge (1903-1918) at the same spot, and incorporated the 1903 stonework into its reinforced concrete abutments.

The Cyrus Bridge is a fortuitously preserved example of the kind of small bridges that were built by the Champion Bridge Company (founded 1872), Wilmington, Ohio, the oldest bridge company in the U.S. Techniques of deck construction used on the single-span Cyrus Bridge are illustrative of those used by Champion even on its larger truss and longer deck bridges. Moreover, these techniques were adapted for use in floors and

roofs of concrete and steel buildings of the period.

The Cyrus Bridge is considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing structure pertaining to the nearby village of Whites Creek.

Project

Information:

This documentation was undertaken by the Cyrus Dock Co., Inc, in June of 1992, in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement of October, 1991, by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Huntington District, as a mitigative measure prior to construction of the Cyrus Dock Company's coal loading facility on the Big Sandy River. The Cyrus Bridge and its site will be avoided and preserved *in situ*.

Douglas L. Bailey, Consulting Archaeologist  
618 Grant Street  
Fairborn, Ohio 45324

CYRUS BRIDGE  
HAER No. WV-54 (Page 3)

Location and Setting. The Cyrus Bridge is located at the unincorporated hamlet of Cyrus, in Ceredo District of Wayne County, West Virginia. The bridge formerly spanned an intermittent tributary of White's Creek, itself a tributary of the Big Sandy River. Elevation of the bridge deck is 557 feet ASL. The bridge extends between the N. & W. Railway Co.'s southbound track bed and the Cyrus Road (Co. Road 1/6). It aligns with the west end of Whites Creek Road (Co. Rd. 19) and the east end of the lane to the Abraham Cyrus Farmstead [HABS No. WV-266]. The Cyrus Bridge consists of an earthen ramp, a pier-like western abutment, a steel and concrete deck, and an eastern abutment.

Western Ramp and Approach. A remnant of an earthen ramp exists just east of the Cyrus Road, formerly the Big Sandy River Road (County Road 1). It is the lower end of the western ramp for the bridge. Formerly the ramp directly abutted the existing western abutment, whose present free-standing position and appearance at first resemble a pier. The higher eastern part of this ramp is missing, either having been removed intentionally or having fallen away into the present stream bed. The stream now runs between the "pier" and the ramp. The distance between the ramp remnant edge and the existing deck initially suggested that another deck section and the entire western abutment were missing, perhaps having fallen into the stream. Several quarry-faced blocks found in the adjacent stream bed add to this supposition.

However, clear evidence now indicates that the bridge had one deck span, not two, and that the extant "pier" is in truth the western abutment. Dimensions of the Cyrus Bridge taken from its only known surviving historical graphic depiction, a 1924 railroad acquisition map (Wayne County Deed Book 133, Page 265), are identical with those required in contract specifications: a deck 15 feet wide and 23 feet long (Wayne County Commissioners' Records, Volume 15, Pages 493-494).

On the 1924 map seven-foot wings are drawn extending from the four corners of the inclined deck. The nature of the wings at the western end is unknown: these may have consisted simply of wooden barriers or lines of posts. More importantly, the western end shows no sign of concrete portions having broken away. Thus, it is believed that the western wings were not reinforced concrete. The different nature of the eastern wings (reinforced concrete) and of the western wings (probably wooden) perhaps reflected the fact that the bridge was inclined, thus the sets of wings played different roles in directing vehicles onto the bridge and in channelling surface water drainage. No part of the western ramp was paved.

Western Stone Abutment. At its base, the western abutment is about 16 feet wide and 48 inches thick. Its 43-inch-thick top is capped by a formed cement pad on which the lower end of the bridge deck rests and is anchored. The abutment is

comprised of coursed rubble sandstone blocks laid over 10 feet high. A hard mortar has been used to join the blocks. A typical block is 22 inches high, 32 wide, and 20 deep. The stonework is best described as rough ashlar, or range rough-squared masonry. The abutment's east face is more regularly done than the now-exposed west face, up to which the earthen ramp once had been built. The letters "J.R.A." occur on the face of a stretcher block, near the north edge of the east face, about 5-1/2 feet off the ground. The letters were chiselled using a pointed bar. Their position and workmanship suggest that they are the initials of a mason responsible for the stonework.

Eastern Abutment. The eastern abutment was built in two stages, one stone, one concrete. The two stages of masonry indicate that the abutment has been rebuilt and that the end of the bridge deck has been raised somewhat. In its overall appearance the stone portion resembles the east face of the western abutment. Its west face is nearly 12 feet high and is over 16 feet across. The stonework is coursed rubble. Its west face and south side are exposed. Formed concrete has added both to its height and width. Atop the stonework is an approximately 26-inch-thick pad of concrete directly supporting the bridge deck. Two high concrete wing walls frame the eastern abutment. The tops of the wing walls form low walls to either side of a concrete pavement that descends slightly to the edge of the bridge deck; the northeast wall is over 19 feet long. The tops of both walls are approximately 15 inches wide. Their east ends are buried by railroad ballast, which obscures various inscriptions written atop the walls. The numbers "8-29-1918" on the north wall effectively date the completion of the concrete work. The letters AYI, FB, cS, RD, BB (on the north wall) and cC and Hc (on the southern) are initials of personal names, some readily identified. "cC" was Charlie Canterbury (1899-1958), who lived in the corner house next to the bridge. "BB" was Bernard B. Cyrus (1876-1956), who owned the Canterbury's house, and lived a half-mile to the south on the next farm. "FB" was Fisher B. Drown (1876-1932), who lived in the house just beyond the west end of the bridge. "RD" was Robert L. "Bob" Drown (1899-1976). One or more of the males may have been hired to help Burris and Wilson, local masons awarded the contract for concrete work.

Superstructure. The plan of the deck is a parallelogram 178 inches wide and 279 inches long. Its centerline and sides are oriented at a bearing of 275° (magnetic), its ends at bearing 205°. The deck is made of standard structural steel and reinforced concrete. The structural steel when joined together was the form into which the concrete was poured. The edge of the deck is made of four angle irons and four channel beams. The channel beams are 10 inches wide, 3 inches high, and 1/4 inch thick. These four channel beams were laid on their sides, channels facing inward, end to end, to form a 14.7 by 23 feet rectangle. The rectangle is rivetted together at its

corners. A congruent rectangle of four angle irons was placed atop the channel beams and both rectangles were rivetted together. Each angle iron was laid down so that its width lies atop the channel beam below. Five narrow I-beams (4-5/8 inches wide) were laid parallel to and equidistant to one another, with ends supported by the bottom sides of the two end channel beams. Six long parallel spaces were formed between the seven 23-foot-long elements (the five I-beams and the two longest channel beams). Semi-cylindrical segments of corrugated metal sheet were used to bridge the spaces, and thereby created six barrel vaults 23 feet long. Each such vault has an arc of  $120^\circ$ , a chord of 30 inches, and a rise of 6 inches. Though not visible, heavy iron rods undoubtedly were laid longitudinally and then transversely to reinforce the poured concrete. Transverse rods probably were laid across the tops of the corrugated metal sheets with their ends wedged under the top edges of the channel beams used at opposite sides of the deck. Then, concrete was poured atop the barrel vaults and the reinforcing rods, and struck off level with the tops of the angle irons. Last, reinforcing rods were pressed into the firm surface of the drying concrete, transversely about every 6 inches, and then removed. This slightly roughened the surface of the deck, which being inclined 5 degrees otherwise would have been more dangerous when icy or wet.

Five nuts and washers along each side of the deck secure the ends of either transverse tie rods or shorter hook bolts, or both. A typical tie rod would be threaded and nutted at both ends; in contrast, the unthreaded end of each hook bolt simply would be hooked over one far top edge of a nearby I-beam joist. Hook bolts seem more adapted for use on plank-floored steel bridge decks, where central joists are prone to flex laterally under loads. On concrete-and-steel decks such as the Cyrus Bridge this would not have been much of a problem.

The deck is anchored to masonry below by means of a narrow channel beam pressed channel face down into the concrete pad while firm and still in its wooden form. The nether ends of the side beams are rivetted to the ends of the anchor beam. The specific arrangement for anchoring the east end of the bridge deck is not observable, but undoubtedly is similar.

Side rails and their support posts were attached sometime before the deck concrete was poured. The side rails are made of angle irons and rivets. Each top rail and its lower rail are rivetted to four side posts. The bases of these posts are rivetted to the angle irons and broad channel beams forming the sides of the deck. In addition, each end or corner post is rivetted to a vertical gusset, and together these are joined, by a short piece of angle iron, to the front anchor channel beam set into the concrete pad. An ascriptive metal plaque once was fastened near the center of the northern top-rail. Its position now is marked by two empty holes. Top rails are

CYRUS BRIDGE  
HAER No. WV-54 (Page 6)

of 3-3/8" x 2-1/2" x 1/4" angle iron; lower rails, 2 x 2 x 1/4; posts, 3 x 2 x 1/4.

The bridge generally is intact but is only in fair condition. The eastern stonework with its concrete cap and the southeast wing wall have settled, and are severely cracked from top to bottom. The corrugated metal arches have nearly completely rusted away. Most of the side-rail posts have rusted severely where they meet the deck.

The White's Creek Road. The Cyrus Bridge is situated at the westernmost end of the White's Creek Road. The way for the White's Creek Road was viewed and legally established in August, 1842 (Wayne County Court, Order Book, No. 1, 1842-1851), soon after the formation of Wayne County and its legal separation from Cabell County. The White's Creek Road is designated County Road 19, and for a few years was part of U.S. Route 52. However, during the full period of use of the Cyrus Bridge, inferred to be 1904-1924, the White's Creek Road was not designated a Class A or primary roadway, but did figure in commercial traffic to Wayne Courthouse from Cyrus Station and the White's Creek boat landing on the Big Sandy River, as well as in multipurpose traffic in the hamlet's own socioeconomic hinterland.

The end of the road was positioned to avoid crossing a swamp north of the bridge, and to intersect the Big Sandy River Road opposite the Cyrus Farmhouse lane, which in the nineteenth century led from a store and boat landing on the Big Sandy River. This route is shown on a 1903 plat map related to acquisition of the lands of G.W. Johnson (map dated November 24, 1903, filed with Wayne County Deed Book 58, Page 169). Both the route and bridge are shown on the plat of land acquired from T.J. Booth *et ux* (map dated February 7, 1924, filed with Wayne County Deed Book 133, Page 265). The old right-of-way last was depicted on 1953 highway plans (West Virginia State Road Commission, State Road Project S-617).

In late 1902 the Kenova and Big Sandy Railroad bought land from Abraham Cyrus for the construction of Cyrus Station just southeast of the end of the White's Creek Road (Wayne County Deed Book 57, Page 8). In 1903 the White's Creek Road itself was crossed by purchases of right-of-way. On December 15, 1904, the Kenova and Big Sandy line officially was opened as a single track line carrying loaded cars northbound (Krebs and Teets 1913). Almost certainly, a new road bridge was built, in 1903, its particular design adapted both to the railroad's bed height and the need to cross a stream beside the bed.

County commissioners' records for the period August 19, 1902 to April 11, 1905 were reviewed for information on possible construction of the bridge at Cyrus Station by Wayne County (Wayne Co. Commissioners' Records, Volume 9, Pages 50

through 638). Total lack of mention suggests, or confirms, that if a bridge was built then, it was not by Wayne County, but by the Kenova and Big Sandy Railroad Company. It is believed that the railroad company in 1903 erected a wooden bridge on stone abutments, and that the 1903 stonework later was incorporated into a later bridge, built in 1918 via contracts with Wayne County.

The Contract for the Steel and Concrete Superstructure.

"IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, That the Clerk of this Court have the following notice to Contractors, published in two issues of the Wayne News and Ceredo Advance: NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS, The County Court of Wayne County, West Virginia, will on the 15th day of September, 1917, let to contract the Construction of Heavy Steel Bridge with Concrete floor, at the following named places. One 23 feet long 15 feet wide at Cyrus" and five bridges, stone abutments at Docks Creek, four stone culverts, four concrete culverts, two fills, one stone wall, and three sections of roadway. "Specifications and plans are on file in the County Clerks office, sealed bids will be received until 1. O'Clock PM. of the day of letting, which will be at the Court House, of said Wayne County." (Wayne Co. Commissioners' Records, Volume 15, Page 469; Regular Session of August 29, 1917)

Possibly, the number of bids received was inadequate, as the bid opening was extended in a second and similar notice until October 13, 1917 (Wayne County Commissioners' Records, Volume 15, Page 480).

The contract for the steel and concrete superstructure was given to the Champion Bridge Company.

"CONTRACT. THIS AGREEMENT, Made and entered into between THE CHAMPION BRIDGE COMPANY, (Incorporated) of Wilmington, Ohio, as a First Party, and the parties subscribed below COUNTY COURT, of County of Wayne, State of West Virginia, as a Second Party. WITNESSETH; That said First Party, for consideration hereinafter mentioned hereby agree to furnish the material, and to construct and complete ready for travel, the superstructures, for Four (4) Bridges. \_One over the stream, at Cyrus,---\$518.43 \_Said Cyrus Bridge to be 23 feet long, extreme length; to have 15 feet clear roadway and to have no sidewalks. \_CYRUS BRIDGE, The said Second Party hereby agrees to have the substructure ready for the erection of said superstructure on or before the 1st, \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. 191\_\_\_\_, and said First Party agrees to

have the superstructure completed on or before the 1st Dec. A.D. 1917."  
(Wayne County Commissioners' Records, Volume 15, Pages 493-494)

On the same contract, Champion also was to build three other bridges: over the Norfolk and Western railroad tracks at the mouth of Bull Tunnel (for \$5,784. 21), over Trace Creek at John Workman's (for approximately \$585.00), and over Long Branch at Bascom Bowen's Store (for \$563.70). The contract was signed by H.H. Spain, Agent, and, at Wilmington, Ohio, by Robert Owens, President of the Champion Bridge Company. (Wayne County Commissioners' Records, Volume 15, Pages 493-494)

Despite omission of dates, it is clear that the Champion Bridge Company actually put up the bridge superstructure, for on October 28, 1918, they were paid out of the General County Fund via warrant 4448 "Champion Bridge Co., Bridge at Cyrus, \$518. 43" (Wayne County Commissioners' Records, Volume 16, Page 29).

The Champion Bridge Company. The Champion Bridge Company was one of the largest independent bridge companies in the United States. Founded in 1872, six years later Champion moved its production facilities to Wilmington, Ohio, where it still does business at 261 East Sugartree Street. Champion built a great number of steel bridges in the eastern U.S. and southern states between 1872 and the early 1930s. Beginning in the 1930s Champion diversified its production, and now is most active in structural building parts and materials handling systems. (Clinton County Historical Society 1982: 67) In its 120 years of operation, the Champion Bridge Company never had a bridge fail due to faulty engineering (Miars 1972: 31).

Robert Livingston Owens (1866-1932) served as general manager for Champion between 1904 and 1931, but never was its president. Abel C. Briggs was president 1916-1934 but was ill during the years 1917-20. (Daily News-Journal 1929: 114; Miars 1972: 41) In 1918, during Briggs' illness, Owens signed the Cyrus Bridge contract as acting president. In the late 1880s and 1890s Owens was responsible for opening Champion's large southern territory, where Champion built many small highway bridges (Miars 1972: 15).

H.H. Spain, Agent, travelled extensively for many years after 1900 as a salesman for Champion, but lived in Worthington, Ohio. Spain obtained the contract for the five-span, 1023-foot-long bridge over the New River Narrows in Giles County, Virginia (Miars 1972: 27, 157). The Narrows bridge was contracted in September, 1916, and erected in 1917. It is probable that deck construction techniques on this noteworthy example served as an immediate model for the small county road bridge at Cyrus, built the following year.

Abel C. Briggs (1856-1937) joined Champion in 1884 as assistant engineer, and in 1885 became chief engineer, serving until 1916. He greatly advanced the engineering department at Champion, was largely responsible for its reputation in engineering through the years, and had a large impact on the company's growth (Miars 1972: 15, 36). With A.C. Briggs as chief engineer, Champion was one of the first companies to promote and use steel for smaller highway bridges (Clinton County Historical Society 1982: 67).

Champion typically negotiated a variety of contractual arrangements for constructing its bridges. On some contracts, Champion did both the superstructure and abutment work. On others, it erected the superstructures only. West of the Mississippi, it sold bridges to be erected by others (Miars 1972: 24, 29; Miars 1992 personal communication). On the Cyrus contract, the bridge deck parts were shipped by rail to the adjacent siding at Cyrus Station, and were assembled under the direction of a Champion erection foreman, undoubtedly using local aggregate and some local labor. The odd parallelogram shape of the Cyrus Bridge deck suggests that structural elements were assembled at site and adapted to the peculiar configuration of the abutments on hand. However, Champion had other larger jobs in Wayne County, and may have had ready access to a steam-powered rail derrick so it could have shipped and positioned the deck largely pre-assembled. The closeness of the siding at Cyrus Station could have allowed the company to side-track a derrick off the busy main railroad line.

A state-wide inventory and evaluation of 4347 bridges in West Virginia was conducted in cooperation with the W. Va. State Highway Department (Kemp 1984). Of these, 137 were evaluated as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and 63 were nominated. Of the 63, only one, a Pratt through-truss in Taylor County, was built by Champion; that example dates to 1894, and was the first contract Champion had in West Virginia.

Company records indicate that from 1893 to 1930 Champion won only 48 contracts in West Virginia, less than 1 percent of 6060 taken (Contract Books 1 and 2). These 48 contracts occur in discrete periods: (a) 1 contract in 1894, (b) 9 contracts in 1904-1908, (c) 34 in 1915-1925, (d) 4 after 1925. Wayne County contracts account for 47.9% of all W. Va. contracts, and 65.7% of those in the period 1915-1925. The war years 1917 and 1918 saw the erection of the greatest number of Champion company bridges in W. Va., including the Cyrus Bridge.

The Cyrus Bridge, Champion Contract No. 3561, is noted explicitly in a single document in company records: Contract Book, Nos. 3447-3592 (Ohio Historical Society MSS 817, Box 3, Folder 1), index citation on Page 4, Line 10, and financial

account on Pages 234-235. The account shows that the Cyrus Bridge was erected at a loss. Dates of construction cannot be determined accurately from the financial account. However, bridge components were off-loaded at Cyrus Station by Champion agent Rankins, and the bridge physically was erected by or under A.H. Simpson and G.C. Richardson. Albert Henry Simpson (1859-1950) began to work for Champion in 1897, and served over 20 years as an erection foreman, mostly in the south (Miars 1972: 43). The identity of erection foreman "G.C. Richardson" is unclear. He probably was a relative of brothers Cash L. and Tom Richardson, company erection foremen. Cash L. Richardson (1889-1965) worked at Champion after 1905, erected bridges up to 1918, was shop superintendent 1918-1934, and became one-third owner in 1935 (Miars 1972: 43).

#### The Masonry Contract

"This day, sealed bids for Concrete work at Cyrus Bridge, under Plans and Specifications of G.M. Johnson, County Engineer, were presented and same opened in Court, and considered and it appearing to the court, that the Bid of George T. Burris, and J.C. Wilson was the lowest bid for said work. It is therefore ordered by the court that said work be and is hereby awarded to the said George T. Burris, and J.C. Wilson at the price of \$10.50 per cubic yard, same to be done in accordance with the plans of G.M. Johnson, County Engineer. It is further ordered that before the order goes into effect, that the said George T. Burris and J.C. Wilson do execute and bond in the penalty of \$100.00 Dollars, with surety to be approved by the Court conditioned according to law." (Wayne County Commissioners' Records, Volume 15, Page 586, Session of April 1, 1918)

The total amount paid to Wilson and Burris for concrete-work on the Cyrus Bridge cannot be determined. First, though the price per cubic yard is known (\$10.50), the volume of such work cannot be determined: it is not known what if any concrete work was done at the west end of the bridge, and part of the east approach is buried beneath the bed of the southbound railroad tracks. Second, payments from the General County Fund often were recorded in general terms, occasionally reflecting that several projects were billed on a single invoice.

Three warrants for payment were made to Burris and Wilson in late 1918: (1) No. 4314, September 2, for \$871.70, "In full for the contract at Dock's Creek"; (2) No. 4315, September 2, for \$200.00 "On Contract"; and (3) No. 4377, October 8, for \$714.91, "Concrete and Exc. work & etc." (Wayne County Commissioners' Records, Volume 16, Pages 2 and 14).

Burris and Wilson. Burris and Wilson were masonry contractors working in partnership. George Thomas Leslie Burris (1862-1949) began his career as a stone mason and quarrier, worked for the English Stone Company and for the railroad as a foreman, supervised bridge, building, and culvert construction, and eventually became a private contractor specializing in concrete work and concrete bridges. He was born in Boyd County, Kentucky, and worked chiefly in its easternmost counties until 1906 when he moved to Thacker Ridge in Wayne County, West Virginia, where he did most of his later work as private contractor with Wilson in partnership (Hurt 1991: 224-228, 277, and 278). Between 1903 and 1945 Burris owned land in Wayne County, chiefly on Whites Creek, Cragston Creek, Sperry Run, and the Big Sandy; he bought and sold most of his small tracts between 1911 and 1918 (Wayne County Grantor and Grantee Indexes). Burris hired many locals to help with his many contracts (Clifford and Sadie Smith interview). He retired in 1926.

Little is known of partner James C. Wilson (1873-1962). Between 1911 and 1918 Wilson owned land in Wayne County, on Cedar Run and Mill Branch, and in 1922 held quite a few small lots in the Kenova vicinity (Wayne County Grantor and Grantee Indexes).

In 1918 Burris and Wilson contracted to do the concrete work on the Cyrus Bridge, stone abutments for the Docks Creek Bridge, and the concrete approach to an abutment for the Elijahs Creek Bridge. Wayne County paid them \$871.70 for Docks Creek (Warrant 4314), and \$247.16 for Elijahs Creek (Warrant 2658) (Wayne County Commissioners' Records, Volume 16, Page 2 and Volume 15, Page 539). The specific amount paid for concrete work on the Cyrus Bridge is unclear, but was bid at \$10.00 a cubic yard. Elijahs Creek, the same year, was contracted to them at \$8.00 a cubic yard.

An inscription on the top of the northern wing wall of the eastern abutment of the Cyrus Bridge effectively dates the completion of that concrete work: "8-29-1918". The superstructure or its components were off-loaded at Cyrus Station September 25, 1918. The steel and concrete superstructure was erected soon after and finished before October 28, when payment of Champion's invoice was authorized by the county court.

Change in Railroad Grade. Soon after Champion completed the bridge, with its specific accommodations for the height of the grade crossing at the east end of the bridge, the N. & W. Railway Company, once again, began to change the grade. The response by the County Commissioners was an immediate court order.

"IN THE MATTER OF THE OBSTRUCTION OF THE COUNTY ROAD CROSSING AT CYRUS STATION. Whereas information has been received by this Court that the Norfolk and Western Railway Company contemplates raising its railroad track known as the Big Sandy line extending through this County and along by Cyrus Station to the extent of about 18 inches which work has actually been commenced by said Company; and Whereas, in case said Railroad Tract [sic] is raised as contemplated said work will result in so obstructing the County Road Crossing immediately west of said Station to such an extent as to render said crossing practically impassable for vehicles.

It is therefore ordered that said Railway Company be notified to desist from further prosecution of its work of raising said Railroad tract [sic] at said crossing unless and until it shall have constructed a suitable County Crossing at said point without increasing the grade at said point or the distance to be travelled over said County Road.

A copy of this order served on said Company shall be sufficient notice to it of the requirements thereof." (Wayne County Commissioners' Records, Volume 16, Page 64, Session held December 3, 1918)

The Cyrus Bridge a Particularly Dangerous Crossing. The Cyrus Bridge's especially long eastern wing walls and their absence on the lower west end is explained by the danger of having to hasten horses and steel-rimmed wagons, loaded or not, over the high hump of the busy bed and tracks only to descend quite rapidly down to an inclined, occasionally wet or icy bridge deck. Moreover, in these acts, one might meet loaded east-bound traffic, sight unseeable, already lumbering up the one-lane bridge from the west. Thus, the danger added by raising the railroad bed "about 18 inches" was not at all insignificant. Despite the 1918 reconstruction of the Cyrus Bridge, its crossing remained inherently unsafe and apparently memorable (Caroline Cyrus, Ben and Laura Drown, Clifford and Sadie Smith interviews).

Abandonment of the Cyrus Bridge. In 1923 and 1924 the Norfolk and Western Railroad, successor to the Kenova and Big Sandy Railway Company, purchased more right-of-way in order to double-track their Big Sandy line (Wayne County Deed Book 133, Page 265, April 10, 1924). In an agreement reached between H.O. Wiles, County Road Engineer, and the N. & W., fourteen grade crossings from Kenova to Cyrus and Prichard – "most of them very dangerous" – were eliminated (Wayne County News 1924). At Cyrus a standard undergrade crossing was built for the Big Sandy Road and the track bed was raised about 10 feet. The northbound bed and tracks and its underpass section were built first, then the southbound tracks were pulled up, the remaining underpass section built, and new bed and tracks laid.

CYRUS BRIDGE  
HAER No. WV-54 (Page 13)

The west end of the Whites Creek Road was bent to the south to intersect with the Big Sandy Road east of the tracks. The Cyrus Bridge was buried partly by ballast, was cut off from the Whites Creek Road, and no longer could be used. One map of this period shows the bridge in general plan (N. & W. 1924, in Wayne County Deed Book 133, Page 265).

In subsequent years, the course of the stream between the railroad tracks and the Big Sandy River Road was changed. The N. & W. laid heavy riprap along the sides of the swamp and stream north of the bridge. The N. & W. rerouted the stream, which used to flow under the Cyrus Bridge, to flow further to the east, away from the tracks. It was at that time that part of the western ramp was removed. The bridge site presently is lightly wooded.

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Wayne County News

- 1924 "Will Eliminate Fourteen Grade Crossings Here." Vol. 52, No. 4, January 31 issue, p. 1.

Interviews:

David H. Miars

Interview by Douglas L. Bailey, October 19, 1992, 4-6 P.M.

David Simmons, Ohio Historical Society

Discussion with Douglas L. Bailey, December 16, 1992

Clifford Smith and Sadie Hazelett Smith

Interview by Douglas L. Bailey, February 15, 1993, 12:30-4:30 P.M.

Repositories Searched and Agencies Contacted (July-October, 1992):

Champion Bridge Company, Wilmington, Ohio

Clinton County Historical Society, Wilmington, Ohio

Clinton County Public Library, Wilmington, Ohio

Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio

Archives and Library Division

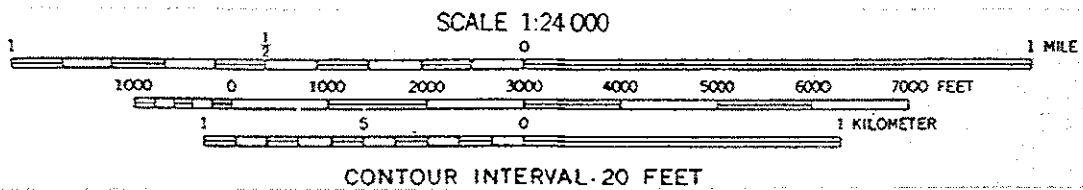
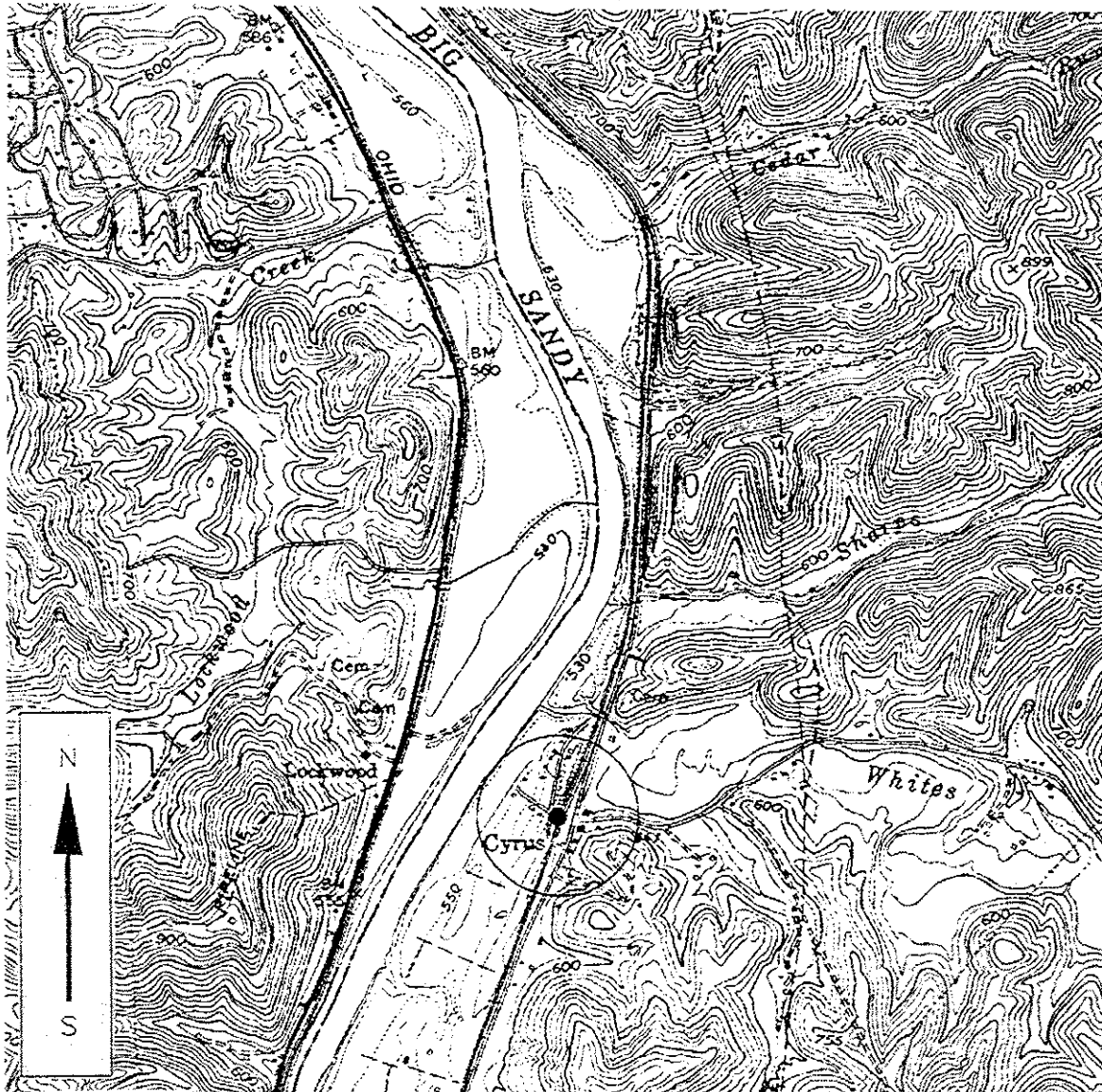
Wayne County Civil Offices, Courthouse, Wayne, W. Va.  
County Clerk  
Clerk of Court  
Surveyor

West Virginia Department of Highways  
Structures Division, Charleston  
Right-of-Way Division, District 2, Huntington  
Bridges Division, District 2, Huntington  
Wayne County Highway Garage, District 2, Wayne

West Virginia Division of Culture and History, Charleston  
Archives and History Library  
Historic Preservation Unit

LOCATION MAP

Portion of USGS Topographic Quadrangle: Burnaugh, Kentucky/ West Virginia  
Scale of 1: 24, 000



## LOCALE MAP

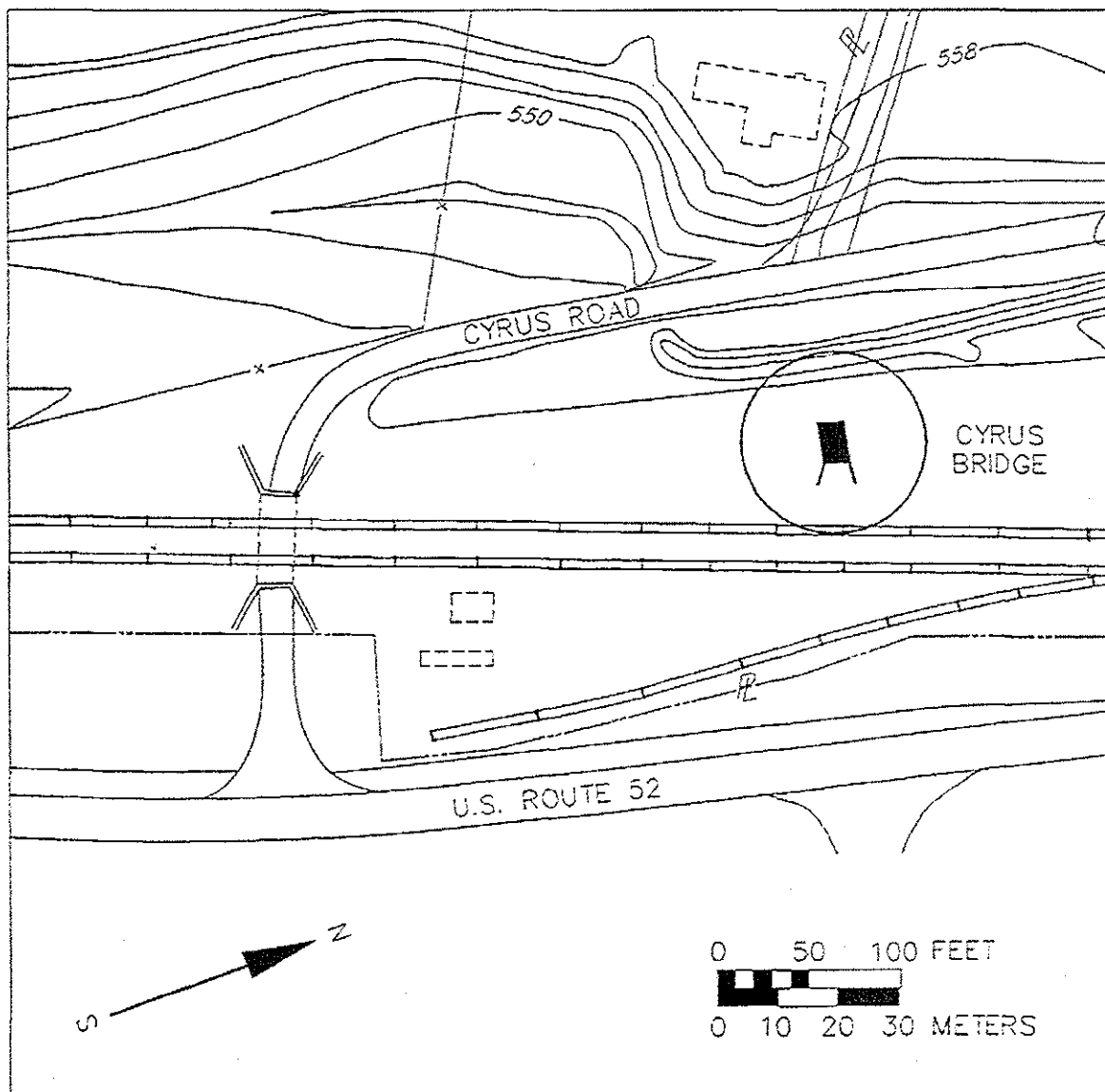
Annotated portion of:

Cyrus Dock Company, Inc.

1992 Supplemental Map: Modification No. 1, DEP Permit No. 0-5003-91.

NPDES Permit No. WV 1010808, MSHA I.D. No. 46-07946. April, 1992.

Scale 1 inch: 100 feet, or 1: 1200.



SITE MAP

(Based on field data collected by D. Bailey, 1992.)

